

be going if it weren't for the Website. Someone forwarded the URL to my wife, she mailed it to me, and I forwarded it to my father in Maine who is coming down that weekend...." Future plans for Lowell Folk Festival site include the addition of both audio and video clips as well as presenting a festival retrospective (the 1996 festival will be Lowell's 10th). Other current World Wide Web efforts at the park include building on the Lowell National Historical Park section of the NPS home page, adding more in-depth information about park resources and visitor offerings.

Another potential park Web project involves a partnership with a group called the Concord Consortium and with the Charles River Museum of Industry in Waltham, Massachusetts. The Consortium, an innovative group of educators based in Concord, Massachusetts, has submitted a planning grant to the National Science Foundation to design a Virtual Museum of Invention and Technology, which would be based on resources available at the Park, the Charles River Museum, and other sites located in the United States and abroad.

The proposed Virtual Museum would be modeled in part after the Berkeley Museum of Paleontology Website which features the Berkeley Museum as the primary resource with a "virtual subway" providing connections to other thematically-linked museums (including museums in Russia and France). The Consortium's planning

grant would be followed by an NSF Informal Science Grant to produce the Virtual Museum. It would be designed not only to make information and resources available, but also to facilitate interactive education for learners of all ages. Potential exhibits may include weaving on a virtual loom, designing and building machines online, live video feeds of existing park interpretive programs, and opportunities to understand how water turbines and waterwheels work. The intention is to encourage visitor interaction with the exhibits, the park, and other electronic visitors.

Lowell National Historical Park represents a unique collection of cultural resources which are interpretively rich, exceptionally educational, and highly enjoyable for those who visit the park. The park themes and sites are both diverse and complex, lending themselves well to the ambitious and exciting virtual museum experience described above. The project would take advantage of current technology to present the industrial revolution story, would offer additional opportunities for interactive education, and ideally encourage a wider audience to visit and to learn about our nation's unique historical and cultural treasures.

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Winona Peterson

Gettysburg NMP and the Electronic Frontier

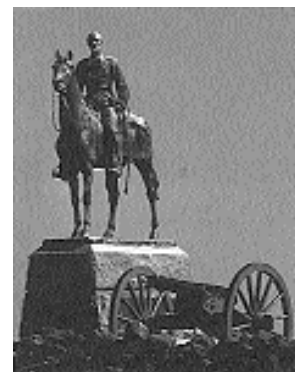


Photo by Richard Frear, courtesy Gettysburg National Military Park.

Among Gettysburg National Military Park's significant cultural resources are 90+ archival collections totaling over 500 linear feet of soldiers' diaries, letters, and photographs; Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association records; and reference copies of the records of the first park commissioners and historians. In December of 1994, an assessment of Gettysburg National Military Park's records was completed by the WASO Senior Archivist. Recommenda-

tions made in the assessment have caused the park to take a closer look at what has been done in the past, and to begin planning for the future of these significant holdings. For the purposes of this article, the Gettysburg archives are defined as the non-official, audio-visual, textural and electronic records acquired or created by the park for the purpose of reference, exhibitions or resource management.

The cultural resources branch of the Resources Management Division requires ongoing

access to the information contained within these archival collections to perform its daily functions. Thus, the bulk of the park's archives has fallen under the mantle of that branch and has been used as a tool for NPS mission-oriented research. There has also become an increased interest by the American public in the events that shaped the beginnings of military parks and in the history of the historic preservation movement. Researcher demand has placed yet another burden on already tasked cultural resources. Interestingly enough, it has only been within the past decade that these holdings were deemed of significant value to persons other than park historians.

Since mid-January of 1995 the park has been on a vision quest for the future of the archives. What follows is a description of where we have been, and in which direction the park would like to find itself going. For those of you also on your vision quest, don't give up! We are all out there together and much of this is uncharted territory. It has been Gettysburg's experience that most everyone contacted for information and resources are more than willing to share their expertise.

The ultimate outcome of this project is to preserve the original documents, organize the information about the documents in a logical manner, and which direction the park would like to find itself going. For those of you also on your vision quest; don't give up! We are all out there together and much of this is uncharted territory. It has been conserve the originals and then store them appropriately. Some of this conservation will be accomplished through an agreement with Harpers Ferry Center's Division of Conservation.

The park has been approached by several private organizations wishing to digitize the collections at no cost to the park. These vendors hope to develop a number of products using park archival materials as content. The vendor would profit by selling the products under the vendor's name(s). Under some circumstances, the park might obtain a portion of the profits.

Similar projects are being explored in other parks. Gettysburg acquired contracts and agreements from these parks and closely considered them. The positive side of such collaborative arrangements would be that the archival collection digitization could be quickly accomplished, using the expertise and personnel of the private company. However, such collaborative work assumes that the fundamental building blocks, such as archival finding aids, are in place.

The first question to be asked is whether or not a good finding aid exists. If the answer is "no," then one must complete some legwork before entertaining offers like that mentioned above. To

reformat the archival information without a means to retrieve it makes the information practically useless to the prospective user. Gettysburg NMP is currently in the process of developing a finding aid for the archives. Once this vital component is completed the project can proceed.

There are a number of software programs on the market that would provide assistance in the development of a finding aid. Whatever you choose should provide good collection management capabilities as well as a versatile, standard means of documenting your holdings. The park is currently assessing the potential benefits of having long-term volunteers, interns, and/or privately-funded contract employees assisting park staff in the completion of this phase of the project.

When funding is found, we also plan to purchase a software program to support and facilitate this work as well as the necessary hardware to get the project to its full potential. Currently, we are forming a partnership with the Adams County Historical Society and Gettysburg College, whose collections provide a nice complement to the holdings maintained by the National Park Service. Ultimately, these combined collections (as well as those under the purview of the park's curator) should be networked and made accessible to researchers.

Using contacts from the Department of Agriculture who are providing technical and informational support, we hope to expand the park site on the World Wide Web to make these archival collections accessible to researchers all over the world. It will be some time before the park is prepared to make this step; however, it continues to be part of the planning for meeting the ultimate goals of the project.

The park hopes to develop a means of having funds funnel back to this project to defray some of the costs and to support upgrades in technology as they develop. As public demand increases for photo duplication, there is a market for that service. This project will make the process of image-making less time consuming while at the same time providing revenue to the park.

Various sources of funding are being explored. One of the avenues entertained was to "hire" a project director through a grant to be submitted by a cooperating non-profit organization. This person would oversee the digitization of the collection, write grant proposals for continued financial support, and oversee the work of the long-term volunteers or other staff. General oversight would still be the responsibility of the park historians.

A few words of caution when undertaking a project of this sort: technology is changing at a mind-boggling rate of speed. This is not a good

excuse for doing nothing; however, some of the companies providing services have kept up the changing pace; others have not. Make sure you identify your needs, then work to find the best match out there.

In many cases, microfilming will still be a necessary component in your strategy since microfilm lasts 10 to 20 times as long as digital media and is not software-dependent as some compressed images and proprietary packages are. Digital images can be used to produce long-lived computer output microfilm, just as digital images can be produced from microfilm. Many major preservation organizations are currently recommending this two-part approach as it provides the best combination of long-term preservation and access advantages for significant materials. Your park may end up using a number of different media depending on the types of collections you hold.

One area that seems to be out of reach because of budgetary constraints is that of training. Numerous sources provide training that has a high price tag attached. What we have learned has

been through trial and error. We have benefited from many phone conversations with people who are also taking these same tentative steps toward a technology which contrasts markedly with the aging archives in their care. It would be desirable to have NPS-sponsored training and a sharing of resources currently found among its staff throughout the agency. There is a great pool of knowledge among all of the parks in the system as well as in other government agencies. We should be working together for the good of the National Park Service.

Some day researchers will be able to access our information resources without leaving the comfort of their own homes. This technological advance will ultimately save the government time and money, put resources in the hands of those who need it most, and help the NPS meet its mission to leave its cultural resources unimpaired for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

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Jim Ogden

Technology and Technology Chickamauga and Chattanooga

*Burnside Fourth
Model 1864
Carbine, Fuller Gun
Collection. Photo by
Ray Parks.*

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park commemorates and preserves portions of two significant Civil War Battlefields—the Battle of Chickamauga and the Battles for Chattanooga. For thousands of visitors, an adjunct to studying the fields of these important engagements is the time spent learning from the Claud E. and Zenada Fuller Collection of American Military Shoulder Arms. Displayed in the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor Center in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, the Fuller Collection is one of the premier assemblages of our nation's military longarms from the Colonial period through World War I.

With 355 exhibited weapons and several hundred associated items (bayonets, scabbards,

cartridges, and some variant parts), the Fuller Collection reflects significant technological developments that fueled industrial advances in the United States. Amassed by the Fullers over more than 50 years, the collection is a nationally-important cultural resource. Fuller's lifetime of work has been the foundation on which many more recent arms scholars and researchers have built their studies. While some of these investigators have advanced the scholarship on certain weapons much further than what Mr. Fuller was able to do in the first half of the 20th century, Mr. Fuller's work is still a benchmark for those laboring in the field.

Now, a modern technology will help interpret and make Mr. Fuller's knowledge more readily available. This spring, Chickamauga and

